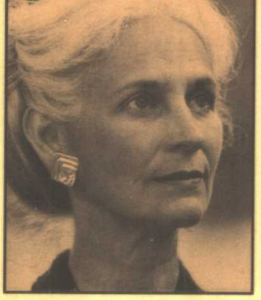
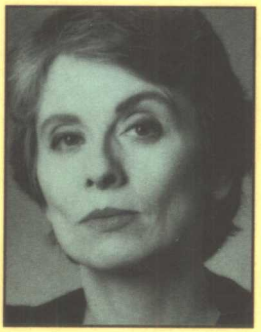
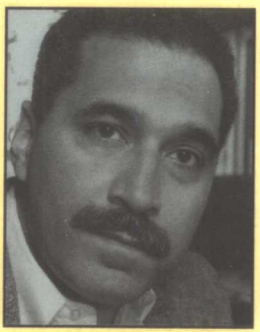
ANDREA A. LUNSFORD
JOHN J. RUSZKIEWICZ

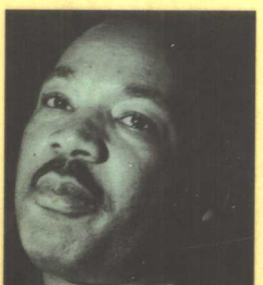


THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS

Readings for Critical Thinking and Writing







The Presence of Others

Readings for Critical Thinking and Writing

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The Ohio State University

JOHN J. RUSZKIEWICZ
The University of Texas at Austin

S T. M A R T I N ' S P R E S S
New York

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Preface

"For excellence," writes Hannah Arendt, "the presence of others is always required." Not genius, she tells us, not divine inspiration, not even good old-fashioned hard work, but *others*. In choosing a title for this text, we thought of Arendt's statement, because this book aims to lead students toward excellence in reading and writing, toward excellence in thinking through difficult issues, toward excellence in articulating their own positions on issues and providing good reasons to support those positions. If students can achieve such goals, they can achieve excellence throughout their college careers and, we would wager, well beyond their undergraduate days.

Just as important, however, we wish to demonstrate how true excellence is achieved only in and through the presence of others. Put another way, we believe that no one is excellent all alone. Thus our title, *The Presence of Others,* reflects the assumption that critical thinking and writing always occur in relation to other people's thoughts and words.

Indeed, the thoughts, words, and deeds of others set a context for all our thinking, providing the shoulders we can stand on as we try to reach higher and think better than we ever have before. The ideas and actions of others are part of what some call the unending *conversation* of our lives, the ceaseless chorus of language we hear all around us in advertisements, music, television, and other media; in school; and in our everyday exchanges with those we know and love. As the metaphor of the conversation suggests, other people provide varying perspectives on issues, different "takes" that help us to clarify our own assumptions and provide a sounding board for our ideas; they turn our monologues into dialogues or even polylogues. Multiple perspectives thus characterize this anthology; it is a book of strong voices and challenging views.

Two of these voices belong to us, the editors, John Ruszkiewicz and Andrea Lunsford. Friends of some twenty-two years standing, we studied for the Ph.D together at Ohio State, taught together during these years, and graduated together in 1977. We take very different perspectives on most issues—John's views usually conservative and traditional, Andrea's liberal and feminist. Our varying points of view, and many conversations about our differences, inspired this text, and we aim to highlight, not obscure or mute, our own perspectives. Unlike many (perhaps most) composition

anthologies, which present their materials as though they were neutral or unaffected by editorial choices and individual agendas, we make our opinions known and try to tell readers directly why we selected particular readings. We invite them, moreover, to question those choices and challenge our points of view, to consider not only what we have included but also what we have excluded—and why.

Our editorial choices and commentaries will quickly suggest that we often disagree. But disagreement, conflict, and agonism are *not* guiding principles of this book. It is not a tennis match of ideas, one that will yield winners and losers. Rather, we are interested in how we all come to know and to take positions on various issues, how to nurture open and realistic exchanges of ideas. Most important, we want to open this exchange to our readers, both students and instructors. This anthology's success will be measured by how actively readers join in conversation with the voices that speak throughout its pages. In short, if this book were a tennis match, it would be one with no spectators sitting on the sidelines. Everyone would be out on the court.

The Presence of Others aims to open and sustain an animated conversation—among the 74 readings in the text, the editors and students whose commentary appears with the readings, and all the teachers and students we hope will enter the discussion. But this text also aims to do something more: to point up the ways in which all these voices speak from particular perspectives, points of view that may not be stated but that are important in understanding what the writers are saying. This highlighting of perspective begins with profiles of the editors and the student commentators. In them, we each try to say a little about our backgrounds and philosophies, likes and dislikes, and to suggest how they have shaped our work on *The Presence of Others*. Understanding varying perspectives, of course, can only be fully realized by the active participation of our readers: they are the ones who we most hope will join the conversation in these pages—to examine the assumptions underpinning the readings and editorial commentary, to examine their own assumptions, and to articulate their own positions on the issues involved. Throughout, *The Presence of Others* attempts to elicit such participation.

These three key terms—*conversation, perspective, participation*—are all fairly abstract, however. To see how they are made concrete in *The Presence of Others,* let us take a brief look at how the book proceeds.

Two introductory chapters provide strategies *on reading and thinking critically* and on moving *from reading to writing*. The first chapter offers guidelines for analytic and critical reading practices. The second reviews the writing process and offers guidelines for the writing assignments in the book as well as tips on using sources and on working effectively with others.

Each *readings chapter* opens with a page of brief, often provocative quotations from the readings, providing a glimpse of what is to come,

setting mental wheels turning, and thus opening the conversation of the chapter. *Chapter introductions* announce the issues raised in each chapter, set a context for discussing them, and close with a set of questions that ask readers to begin to articulate their own ideas about the chapter's central issues.

An initial selection, often a piece of sufficient reputation to be regarded as "canonical," opens the intertextual conversation of each chapter. Subsequent readings represent points of view in dialogue with those voiced in the initial reading—and with one another as well. Although the readings are conversationally and thematically related, they represent a wide range of genres—poems, speeches, oral histories, sermons, prayers, short stories, and personal memoirs as well as essays and articles—and they take a wide range of varying and often competing perspectives. In Chapter 3, for instance, on education, John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University* rubs conversational shoulders with bell hooks's "Keeping Close to Home: Class and Education," Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary,* and Gwendolyn Brooks's "We Real Cool"—and it is richly complicated in the process. In another instance, an excerpt from Robert Bly's *Iron John* runs smack into Joe Bob Briggs's parody, "Get in Touch with Your Ancient Spear." Elsewhere, June Jordan defends Anita Hill against her accusers while Naomi Munson questions Hill's credibility. *Cross-references* throughout lead readers back and forth among the readings, helping them to recognize the lines of conversation across the pages. This spirited conversation will, we hope, draw readers into active participation in the discussion.

Headnotes to each reading provide background information about the selection and its relationship to others in the book, and offer explanations for our editorial choices. Because these headnotes also offer our own strong opinions about the selection, each is signed.

Each selection is followed by *questions* that extend the process of careful reading by asking students first to *question the text,* to probe each selection's assumptions (and those in the editors' headnotes as well); to *make connections* with other readings in the text; and to *join the conversation* by responding to the ideas in the reading, and by articulating their own stances. Each reading includes one or two questions designed for small-group work, which we hope will encourage further participation in the intertextual conversation and make concrete the presence of others.

One selection in each chapter includes our own *annotations and reader responses,* and also those of our student commentators. In addition to offering very different "takes" on the readings, these commentaries are intended to disrupt the static nature of the printed page, inserting new voices and points of view, asking questions, talking back to the readings—and to one another. This book has been designed to allow readers to annotate right along with us.

Each chapter concludes with a list of *other readings.* Rather than wrap-

ping the conversation up, this annotated list is intended to open discussion up to the presence of still others.

The accompanying instructor's manual provides detailed advice for teaching this book, including commentary on each selection, sequenced reading and writing assignments, and a selection of essays and articles regarding the current controversies over the college curriculum.

Acknowledgments

This anthology has changed considerably in the three years since we began exploring its possibilities, primarily because of the presence of many, many others whose perspectives and voices echo in these pages. Of great importance throughout the development process have been the extensive support and ongoing spirited conversation we have received from the St. Martin's staff, and particularly from Kristin Bowen, John Elliott, and Steven Kutz. Nor will we soon forget the afternoon of intense discussion we had in Cincinnati with Ed Tiefenthaler and Ira Warshaw; their experience with teachers, their appreciation of students' needs, and their tough questions served as touchstones for us during a critical stage in this project. We have also enjoyed the extraordinary grace of Marilyn Moller's editorial attention for the entire project; her probing questions provided the best and often only means of confronting our own assumptions, particularly those that we ourselves tend not to notice or examine. This book bears the mark of Marilyn's meticulous thought and care on every page.

In addition to these friends at St. Martin's, we are indebted to many colleagues at our home institutions—especially Carrie Shively Leverenz at The Ohio State University and Ed Madden at The University of Texas at Austin. Carrie assisted in the hunt for the best possible readings and prepared the instructor's manual. This manual we believe to be thoroughly informed by contemporary reading theory as well as by Carrie's practical experience from having taught the materials in this book. Ed searched the libraries for selections and also contributed the poem that concludes Chapter 9. We owe sincere thanks as well to Aneil Rallin, Deneen Shepherd, Heather Graves, and Lori Mathis, who helped us chase down obscure bits of information and responded to many of our student exercises; to Murray Beja, who worked patiently to capture a reasonable photograph of Andrea; to Ted Warren, who did the same for John; and to Andrea's secretary, Lorraine Carlat, the calm force that runs an inordinately busy office, who worked her magic on this project as on all others. John, not having a secretary until the last few weeks of the job, muddled through.

We are particularly grateful to the students who agreed to add their voices to this text: Traci McLin and Stephen Wallenfelsz from Ohio State and Geoff Henley and Helen Liu from The University of Texas.

Our thanks, too, to another student, John Brady Woodson, whose poem "The Basketball's Bounce," would have appeared in a chapter on sports, a chapter reluctantly cut for reasons of length. We salute as well the many other students who have taught us over the years how to be better classroom colleagues. In many subtle ways, their voices are everywhere present in this text.

In addition, we have been extremely fortunate to receive support, advice, and criticism from a number of generous and talented folks. Lisa Ede and Beverly Moss raised the kinds of questions perhaps only the best friends can; Gerald Graff took time to help us consider the premises on which this book rests and to challenge us to articulate those premises more clearly and fully throughout. Mike Rose provided a series of smart and sensitive responses to sample chapters and to our table of contents. James Kinneavy and Michael Gagarin assisted with several translations; David Madsen supplied one essential historical allusion; and James Duban offered advice about several headnotes. Thanks, too, to Dusa Gyllensvard and Alan Gribben for helping us to secure an important permission.

Finally, we have been instructed and guided by extraordinarily astute reviewers, with whom we have been in conversation throughout this project. We thank Rise Axelrod, California State University, San Bernardino; Grant Boswell, Brigham Young University; Muriel Davis, San Diego Mesa College; Ann Doyle, University of Washington; William Harrison, Northern Virginia Community College; Dona Hickey, University of Richmond; David Malone, Northern Illinois University; Lisa McClure, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale; Kenneth Miller, American River College; Christina Murphy, Texas Christian University; Mary Rosner, University of Louisville; William Smith, Western Washington University; Sandra Stephen, Youngstown State University; Pat Sullivan, University of New Hampshire; C. Jan Swearingen, University of Texas at Arlington; and Allysen Todd, Community College of Allegheny County. They have consistently joined in and talked back to us, providing a richly textured dialogue we hope these pages reflect.

Profiles of the Editors and Student Commentators

Andrea A. Lunsford

I was born in Oklahoma and have lived in Maryland, Texas, Washington, Ohio, and British Columbia, yet when I think of "home" I think of the soft rolling foothills of the Smokey Mountains in Eastern Tennessee. The hills there are full of Cunninghams, and my granny, Rosa Mae Iowa Brewer Cunningham, and her husband, William Franklin, seemed to know all of them. Like many people in this region, my mother's folks claimed Scottish descent. When I later travelled to Scotland, I discovered that many of the songs we sang on my grandparents' big porch were Scottish in origin.

The only one of her large family to enjoy post-secondary education, my mom graduated with training in teaching and in French from Maryville College in Tennessee. An uncle helped pay her way to school, and it was on a visit to see him that she met my father, another Scottish descendant, Gordon Grady Abernethy. His college education cut short by World War II and the Great Depression, Dad gave up his goal of following his father into dentistry and instead took examinations to become a Certified Public Accountant. In hard times, he and my mother left Oklahoma and settled near her family, where Dad got a job with a defense contractor at Oak Ridge. Mama taught briefly and then stayed home with me and, later, with my two sisters and brother. I played in a special playhouse I built in the woods, spent weekends with my grandparents and dozens of Cunningham cousins, and alternated attending my grandparents' Baptist Church (where they baptized my cousins by plunging them into a river) and my parents' Presbyterian Church, where baptisms seemed like a snap. On occasional Sundays, I got to visit a sister church whose congregation was all black, where the music was mesmerizing, and where I first began to recognize this country's legacy of segregation and racism. My family, I learned, was proud to have fought for the North, though supporting the Union's cause did not exempt them from that legacy.

We read a lot in Sunday School and at Summer Bible School, and at home as well. There I had the luxury of being read to often: *Gulliver's Travels* as it appeared in *The Book of Knowledge* (our family's one encyclopedia), Joseph and His Coat of Many Colors from Hurlbut's *Stories of the*

Bible, Tigger and Roo and Christopher Robin from A. A. Milne, and poems from *A Child's Garden of Verses* are among my earliest memories of texts that grew, over the years, into an animated chorus of voices I still carry with me. Later, I read all of the Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys, and Cherry Ames Senior Nurse series, to be regularly punished for reading in school when I should have been doing something else. Like many young women, I was often "lost in a book," living in a world of heroines and heroes and happy endings. Only slowly and painfully did I come to question the master plot most of these stories reproduced, to realize that endings are never altogether happy and that the roles I play in my own story have been in some important senses scripted by systems beyond my control.

My father wanted me to begin secretarial work after high school, but when I won a small scholarship and got a student job, he and my mother agreed to help me attend our state school, the University of Florida. I graduated with honors but was encouraged by my (male) adviser not to pursue graduate school but rather to "go home and have babies." Instead, I became a teacher, a reasonable job for a woman to aspire to in 1966. Only seven years later did I gather my courage to apply to graduate school after all—and to pursue my Ph.D. Teaching in high school, at a two-year college (Hillsborough Community College in Tampa), and as a graduate assistant helped me reaffirm my commitment to a career in education and introduced me to the concerns that have occupied my professional life ever since: What can I know of myself through my relationships with others? How do people develop as readers and writers? What is the connection between teaching and learning? What does it mean, as the twentieth century draws to a close, to be fully literate?

I pursued these questions in graduate school and beyond, all the while trying to live through two marriages and the loss of my granny, of both my parents, and of my younger brother. Such experiences have led me to think hard not only about the burdens every human life entails but also about the privileges my status as a white, relatively middle-class woman has afforded me. These privileges are considerable, and I do not wish to forget them. In addition, I have enjoyed the support of a vital network of women friends and colleagues. Thanks in large measure to them, I am now a professor in a large research university, and I savor the time I can spend with those I love (especially Lisa Ede, my sisters, their children, and my friend and partner William), and I am somewhat able to indulge my desire to experience as much of the world as possible. I even have season tickets to Ohio State basketball games (no mean feat in the state of Ohio), which I attend regularly with my colleague and friend Beverly Moss. These relationships—and my very special relationship with my students—have added to the chorus of animated voices I carry with me always.

These and other formative relationships and experiences have helped me learn a lesson that informs my teaching, my life, and my work on this book:

that where you stand influences in great measure what you can see. My college adviser, standing as he did in an all-white male professoriate, couldn't quite "see" a young woman joining this elite group, even as a student. My parents, standing as they did in a lower middle class, single-income family with vivid memories of the Depression, couldn't easily "see" beyond the desire for their oldest daughter to get a good, steady secretarial job as soon as possible. And I, standing where *I* do now, am not able to "see" through my students' eyes, to experience the world as they experience it.

Keeping this point in mind leads me to two acts that are by now habitual with me: examining where I stand, with all that implies about inevitably partial vision and perspective; and asking myself where others stand as well. So I came to this textbook project with at least one specific agenda item: to look as carefully and respectfully as I could at John's perspective, at where he stands, and to do the same thing for myself and for every voice included in this text. Such acts are necessary, I believe, before I can say that my opinions are fully considered. My view will always be heavily informed by where I stand. But insofar as I am able to entertain other points of view, I have a chance to understand my own better and to broaden my point of view as well.

John J. Ruszkiewicz

My grandparents never spoke much about their reasons for emigrating from Eastern Europe earlier this century; their grounds for starting new lives in the United States must have seemed self-evident. Moreover, they did abandon those "old countries." Only rarely did I hear them talk nostalgically about the lands they left behind. So I'm a second-generation American with roots in, but no strong ties to, Slovakia, Poland, and Ukraine.

My father and mother were both born in rural Pennsylvania, my dad with five brothers and sisters, my mom with seven—eight if you count the infant who died of measles. Both of my grandfathers and several uncles mined coal in western Pennsylvania, a dangerous and difficult living. After World War II, my parents moved to Cleveland, where jobs were more plentiful, and my dad began a thirty-year stretch at Carling's Brewery. I did my share of manual labor too, for a short time working in a tool-and-die factory, even paying dues to the Teamsters.

But my blue-collar stints were merely summer jobs between college semesters. Education would be my generation's ticket to the American dream. My parents never allowed my brother (who became a physician) or me to consider that we had any choice but college. We attended parochial schools, where headstrong nuns and priests introduced us to learning, moral responsibility, and culture. (By the eighth grade, students at St. Benedict's elementary school could sing three high Masses and two Requiems, one of

those services in Gregorian chant. We understood what most of the Latin words meant too.) As grade schoolers, we had homework every night, hours of it. High school was the same, only tougher. I didn't have a free period in high school until the semester I graduated—and I'm still thankful for that discipline.

The ethnic neighborhood in Cleveland where I grew up in the 1950s is now considered inner-city. It was very much *in the city* when I lived there too, but a nine- or ten-year-old could safely trudge to church alone at 6:00 AM to serve Mass or ride the rapid transit downtown to see a baseball game. I did so, often. In the long, hot summer of 1966, however, Cleveland erupted in riots. From my front porch, I could see the fires.

Politically, I come from a family of Democrats—my gregarious mother, far more interested in people than issues, a party worker in Cleveland's 29th Ward. One of my first political memories is watching John F. Kennedy parade down Euclid Avenue in 1960 during his presidential campaign. But frankly, I was more interested in the new Chrysler convertible ferrying the portly Governor of Ohio. I have retained my fondness for old Chryslers—and just about anything with four wheels.

The first President I voted for was George McGovern, but what could you expect from a kid who spent high school listening to Bob Dylan and who attended college in the sixties? In fact, it was during an anti-war rally at St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, where my drift to the political right began. I had read enough about the history of Vietnam to know that the communist Viet Cong were no angels, but the people at that demonstration believed they were. A professor of physics delivered an impassioned anti-American speech filled with what I knew to be distortions, but no one seemed to care. That moment resonates, after all these years.

Despite the activist times, my college days remained focused on academic subjects—philosophy, history, literature, and cinema. St. Vincent's was small enough to nurture easy commerce between disciplines. I knew faculty from every field, and my roommates were all science majors with views of the world quite different from my own. Debate was lively, frequent, and good-natured. Emotionally I leaned left, but intellectually I found, time and again, that conservative writers described the world more accurately for me. They still do.

Politics didn't matter much in graduate school at Ohio State in the mid 1970s—though I was the only Ph.D. candidate in English who would admit to voting for Gerald Ford. My interests then were *Beowulf,* Shakespeare, and rhetoric. I first met my co-editor, Andrea Lunsford, the first term at Ohio State in an Old English class; we graduated on the same day five years later.

Today, I consider myself an academic and political conservative. Where I work, that makes me a member of the counter-culture, a role I now frankly enjoy. Unfortunately there aren't many conservatives among

humanities professors in American universities, which is a shame. The academy would be a richer place were it more diverse. Politically and intellectually, I find myself in much greater sympathy with Jefferson, Madison, and Burke (Edmund, not Kenneth) than with Rousseau, Marx, Freud, or Foucault. I voted twice for Ronald Reagan and in my office hangs a poster of Margaret Thatcher given to me by a student. It scares the daylights out of some colleagues. My professional friends are mainly Democrats or worse, but I respect them. They sometimes say that they are surprised to find me so reasonable and pleasant, being a Republican and all. I tell them they need to meet—and hire—more Republicans.

Like any good conservative, I prefer to keep my life simple—I could be content with a good car, a sensible dog, and a capable racquetball partner. But for the past fifteen years, I've been teaching at the University of Texas at Austin where life is rarely so simple. I've had a front row seat for many of the recent controversies over political correctness on college campuses. I've even been on stage a few times and have met many of the people who make leftists apoplectic—Lynne Cheney, William Bennett, Dinesh D'Souza, Ed Meese, Christina Sommers, David Horowitz—and have been a fellow of the Heritage Foundation. Yet when I taught a course on the automobile in American culture, I was accused in the local press of teaching a leftist "cultural studies" course. ("What next, guns and ammo?" one amused colleague asked.)

While my politics differ from Andrea's on almost every issue, from abortion to higher taxes on productive people, we agree completely about one thing—the importance of teaching undergraduates how to write. So when I proposed an anthology for writing classes that would broaden the range of readings available to students and make the political persuasion of the editors a part of the package, Andrea agreed to the project. She said it embodied the feminist concept of "situated knowledge." Well, sure, if that makes her happy. I'm no theorist. I was just glad to have the privilege and pleasure of working with my good friend and political *other*.

Geoff Henley

When I met David Horowitz, the editor of the underground newspaper *Heterodoxy,* he said immediately, "You're a real Texan." I don't live on a ranch, but I was born in Dallas, stand six-two, wear boots, and have wrecked a truck. I did my undergraduate work at the University of Texas at Austin and plan to earn a master's degree from the Columbia School of Journalism before going to law school and pursuing a career in media law.

To finance my education, I've held a variety of jobs, everything from working as a reporter for the *Houston Post* during the 1992 Republican convention to selling cars at a Ford dealership in Mesquite. But my greatest

responsibility and personal achievement was serving for a year as editor of *The Daily Texan,* the student newspaper at the University of Texas at Austin.

As one of the few conservative editors-in-chief in that paper's recent history, I took pride in managing to restore objectivity to the news pages, reserving opinions for the editorial pages. But my right-wing views upset more than a few liberals, accustomed as they were to controlling the student newspaper. Forty left-wing English professors once found my commentary so outrageous that they spent more than a hundred dollars of their own money on an advertisement attacking me. And though George Bush turned out to be a weak-kneed disappointment, I take pride in having been the first editor there *ever* to endorse a Republican presidential candidate.

As a reporter for the *Texan* and the *Post,* I covered the likes of Bill Clinton, Louis Sullivan, Camille Paglia, Dan Quayle, and the American Gladiators. With the exception of the Gladiators, I covered them all with equal fairness.

Newspapers have played an important role in my life. From fifth to eighth grade my mother patiently split two *Dallas Morning News* routes with me. As a single mother with four kids (I have two brothers and a sister), she helped me learn the value of work and money. For that I'm grateful.

I hope one day to own a chain of newspapers—where I will continue to work at keeping the rest of the media elite honest.

Helen Liu

For as long as I can remember, I've always wanted to be a teacher. I've never really known what or even whom I wanted to teach, just that I wanted to help others learn. I am a senior at the University of Texas at Austin majoring in journalism. After graduation, I will attend Stanford Law School. I will practice law afterward, but eventually I would like to become a professor. I guess I'm taking the indirect route to teaching, but I'm trying to experience everything I can on the way.

I was born in Virginia but grew up in Texas. My family moved five times beginning from when I was in kindergarten to when I started the fourth grade. We finally settled in Arlington, Texas, where my parents still live. I have a younger brother and a cat.

The past two summers, I have written for the national political trade journal, *Campaigns & Elections,* and interned at the U.S. House of Representatives for the Committee on Ways and Means. On campus, I have worked as a graphic designer for the magazine *Tejas* and have chaired a committee sponsoring recreational events for university students. I have also played intramural softball.

Traci McLin

As a native of suburban Cleveland and one of thirty-plus grandchildren, I have always been considered the "proper" one in my family. "She talks funny" or "you sound just like my mom" were frequent comments. Eventually I came to realize that the chuckles were in response to my attempt to sound as articulate and elegant as my mother did. Today this trait plays a big part in my aspiration to become a spokesperson for a major corporation.

Born in 1973 as the first daughter of Dale and Myra McLin, and now the big sister of Summer McLin, I turned to reading early in my childhood in order to find some type of entertainment. Though I was an usher at the Greater Mt. Zion Baptist Church and participated in other activities away from home, the five-year difference between my sister and me often left me with few alternatives around the house. If I was bored, my parents always suggested reading a book. At first, this seemed unlikely to turn me on, but then I discovered Dr. Seuss and Judy Blume. Their books seemed to tap a volcano of energy inside me.

In grade school, Maurice Sendak's movielike pictures in "Where The Wild Things Are" frightened me; in high school, Toni Morrison's lesson that history repeats itself, "The Bluest Eye," saddened me—and more recently, Terry McMillan's "Waiting To Exhale" seemed like it was written just for me. This book will be required reading for any man I date seriously. Language fascinates me. But I tend to be extremely critical about what I read. My responses are strong, for they express my emotions. I would be lost without the opportunity to express my thoughts in writing.

I consider myself a Democrat and like Bill Clinton. Unlike Ronald Reagan or George Bush, he seems to be for the people. But I don't agree with everything Clinton is doing. I haven't been voting long, though, and am more interested in my major at Ohio State: interpersonal and organizational communications. My capstone area is marketing, and I intern in the Marketing Department at Ohio State during my summers. Just recently I completed my eighth year studying French, the language of romance. When I am not reading or writing, for class or for personal enjoyment, I enjoy public speaking and playing the flute. I would be at an emotional standstill without the ability to express my ideas completely. I release everything inside me with the scroll of the pen!

Stephen Wallenfelsz

When I was born in Columbus in 1969, the last child and only son of Richard and Judith Wallenfelsz, there was a seven-year gap between me and my nearest sibling. The only stories I know of my three older sisters and

me playing together come from other people, old snapshots, and badly lit home movies. By the time my own memories begin, my sisters were already in high and junior high school, much too busy to deal with their younger brother except for occasionally taking charge of him. Much of my time at home, therefore, was spent by myself or sometime later hanging around Ohio State, where my sisters went to school. I remember belonging briefly to the Cub Scouts, but getting kicked out for acting up. In retrospect, I don't think they had enough activities to keep me busy.

The first book I owned was by Dr. Seuss, though I can't remember which one. I was probably more enthralled at the time by the detailed pictures and the bright colors than by the text; I can still remember the intricate cars and roads, and the characters that flowed from page to page, making me want to go faster and faster through the book, and back again. But the texts were even more wonderful when I learned to read them. Reading was an activity I could do happily alone, or quietly when my father was at home. He was not at all tolerant of young children at play, and a desire to stay out of his sight fostered a dependency on the world I found in books, one that allowed me to be anyone and go anyplace, whenever I wanted. This passion continued even after my parents were divorced and I had made more friends in school and the neighborhood. Although I kept busy outside, I always found time to read, devouring the Hardy Boys, the Three Investigators, and, when I had ran out of the others, all of my sisters' Bobbsey Twins collection.

At the Catholic schools I attended, my reading paid off when I placed in advanced reading groups; twice I skipped a grade ahead. Although I did all right in school, I saved my real enthusiasm for pleasure reading. In English classes, I often turned in my projects late, much to the consternation of my teachers, who seemed to favor only repetitious spelling exercises and lengthy book reports. I often felt that these activities distracted me from the real prize in reading, the pleasure of discovering new worlds. With so much to be explored and experienced, who had time for nagging little details?

In high school I had less time for pleasure reading—and more insistent demands placed on me by teachers. But when I did find time to read, the books were often titles I had heard of in classes at school. I struggled through Dante's *Divine Comedy* after a referral in a social studies class, the legends of King Arthur because of their mention in history, science fiction after reading a few short stories in English.

Most importantly, I started to look closely at the writing in the books, not just the subjects they were written about. By the time I started college I had realized that what was *not* written in the books I was reading was as important as what *was* written in them, maybe even more so. This discovery has had a definite impact on how I view my classes and on what I get out

of them. I still read for pleasure on subjects which I find important, maybe more than is helpful with all my college work.

I am currently pursuing dual degrees in writing and rhetoric and in international business management, and I hope to attend law school after graduation. In spite of my interest in these subjects, I don't think of myself as political—though I can recall campaigning actively for Jimmy Carter when I was in second grade! I believe that part of what has encouraged me and enabled me to maintain my interest in ideas has been reading and the critical perspective I bring to everything I read.